



Hundredth Legislature - First Session - 2007
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LR 10

Chairperson: Joel Johnson
Committee: Health and Human Services
Date of Hearing: February 21, 2007

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

The State Children's Health Insurance Program, created by Congress in 1996 and known as Kid's Connection in Nebraska, has been a resounding success. The SCHIP program has reduced the number of uninsured children by a **third** even as the number of uninsured persons continues to rise. The federal government encouraged the participation of the various states in the program by paying seventy-two percent of the cost of the SCHIP programs.

Nebraska's Kid's Connection program has been equally successful. In 2005, over nearly 137,000 children or 30% of all children in Nebraska, obtained access to health care services through the Kid's Connection and the Medicaid Program. Still, nearly 30,000 children in Nebraska remain uninsured.

The SCHIP program is up for reauthorization in Congress this year. A failure to reauthorize this program in a timely manner and with the proper amount of funding will risk cutting children off from the critical health care services that they need.

Given the rising cost of health care and inflation, the amount of federal funds available is not enough to cover the children who are currently served by the SCHIP program. Nebraska is set to face a shortfall of \$14 million in federal funds in Fiscal Year 2008 and that shortfall will only grow in future years.

Nebraska cannot carry the weight of that funding gap. Without proper federal funding, children will have to be cut off our program, depriving children of the health care services they need and costing all of us more when easily prevented illnesses are left to grow into more serious and expensive emergent care episodes. The Federal government should provide the funding necessary to continue this vital program.

Principal Introducer: _____
Senator Joel T. Johnson